Questioner: The bride does not cook meals for it is said that the blood which begins to flow when she reached puberty will not dry on her body if she does.

To sleep on the bier and to refuse to sleep on sleeping-mats is a sign of childhood (for during childhood girls do not think much about cleanliness, but are dirty); it means that they have behind them (literally 'cause not from') childish things. The bier is bare because it is has not been borne the children who live of it to make a fire and cook food, then, when they have eaten that food, their bodies are rich. We say the body becomes unhealthily fat (abyssinia). Food is cooked for a bride because it, bride, a woman, who has not had food collected for her, was first collected for another bride going through the puberty ritual; she will fall sick and her body will grow unhealthily fat. Bringing food for the shoemaker and giving gifts to the singers are to compensate the bride because she has grown up, she is now an adult.

X: The wearing of brown leaves [at the bringing out] is a sign of fertility. The ritual is finished, the girl is someone's wife now. . . . The plantain signifies the penis, the cows because the clients.

Sitting in a stream and letting water carry away pebbles placed between fingers and toes is a symbol of purification and separation from the shade. The first element—purification—was mentioned by most informants. 'The rite means that the dirt is finished,' said Pandam's wife; but the more self-conscious identified 'dirt' with the shade. Mwanimvita made the matter quite clear. When asked why pebbles were placed in the clefts of fingers and toes, he replied: 'Kyala, when he created men, said: "As death throw it away, it is the shade, it is the body."'

Questioner: Is the puberty ritual?

Mwanimvita: It is to say that the shade has brooded over the child, since he created blood we throw him away. May the shade go with those women, then may she bear children; if he does not go, if you do not treat the girl, then Kyala broods over her and she does not bear children.

Questioner: Why does she avoid her father at this time?

Mwanimvita: Because I, the father, and her mother, perform the ritual for our child. Our shade has entered into her, has brooded over her, therefore we do not come together as the man until we have finished treating our child; when we have finished, and have treated her, then we do what we will as the man. If I were to lie with my wife [during the ritual] she refuses, saying: 'Our child has not yet finished, she is still undergoing the puberty ritual.' But if she agrees and we lie together, then our child will never heal. When we have finished the